

New Starts Bi-Weekly Briefing – April 7, 2010

Notes: Bring scorecard to each meeting.

TRO-1, TRO-2, TRO-4, TRO-5, TRO-6, TRO-8, TRO-9, and TRO-10 participated via teleconference.

Orlando Commuter Rail

- The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) wants to include the cost of Positive Train Control (PTC) in its Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) cost estimate. PTC will cost \$4.0-\$5.0 million.
- FDOT requests New Starts funds to help fund PTC, which is a regulatory requirement. This could be viewed as the cost of doing business.
- TRO-9 and TRO-10 mentioned that they have accepted or included PTC in project costs.
- The current cost effectiveness rating is *Medium-Low*. An increased project cost could lower the cost effectiveness rating to *Low*.
- Since the state legislature approved the liability waiver for CSX Railroad, FDOT has learned that the Surface Transportation Board (STB) needs to determine what entity has jurisdiction over the project. A decision normally takes three to four months.
- FDOT would like an FFGA to move forward as soon as possible after the STB makes its determination.
- Amtrak rescinded its Memorandum of Understanding with FDOT. They want the same liability waiver that CSX received.
- The Regional Counsel is asking for a legal opinion.
- FDOT is preparing environmental analyses.
- NEXT STEP/ACTION ITEM:
 - Staff will present the issues to the Administrator this afternoon.

Miami North Corridor

- TRO-4 has learned that Miami-Dade might want to withdraw the Orange Line project from the New Starts pipeline and develop a smaller project.
- NEXT STEP/ACTION ITEM:
 - This will be noted at the bi-weekly meeting with TOA.

Access to the Region's Core

- TRO-2 just received a letter from Governor Christie pertaining to commitment of Transportation Trust Fund money.
- We will need to look at the cash flow for Portal Bridge.
- New Jersey Transit has received a 30-day extension on the bid.
- The Early Systems Work Agreement (ESWA) is circulating and most sign-offs have occurred.
- A response to the letter probably would not affect the ESWA, but could affect the FFGA schedule.
- The Office of the Inspector General has released a draft report.

- NEXT STEPS/ACTION ITEMS:
 - Ask TOA if FTA will accept annual New Starts funding levels greater than \$300.0 million. Our preliminary engineering (PE) letter limited annual funding to \$300.0 million.
 - Does FTA want to require a Capital Reserve Account?

Denver East Corridor and Gold Line

- TPE will be moving FD memoranda and a Letter of No Prejudice (LONP) approval letter for both projects this week.
- The 10-day FD notices were sent to Congress on March 30th so FTA could approve the FD requests as early as April 9th.
- Are we going to want project-specific DBE (Disadvantaged Business Enterprise) plans for the projects? If so, we need to put the requests in the FD approval letters.
- NEXT STEP/ACTION ITEM:
 - Discuss the status and DBE question with TOA this afternoon.

Honolulu

- FTA is working with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the City and County of Honolulu for potential alternative alignments. For now, TPE has not identified any new significant impacts.
- FAA will probably give FTA information by the end of this week.
- Will FTA proceed to a Final Environmental Impact Statement or prepare a supplemental environmental document?
- NEXT STEPS/ACTION ITEMS:
 - Give a summary of the project status to TOA this afternoon.
 - What can staff tell the Administrator about timing that he can convey to the Mayor?

Houston North and Southeast Corridors

- TPE is preparing the FFGA packages and will share them with the Executive Management Team next week.
- The staff goal is to send the FFGAs to OST by April 27th. OST would like a briefing before they receive the packages.
- Within the 60-day letters, TCC needs to look at funding match language.
- FTA will try to execute the FFGAs by July 28th.
- NEXT STEPS/ACTION ITEMS:
 - This afternoon, staff will ask the Administrator if FTA should give OST a briefing prior to their receipt of the FFGAs.
 - Ask the Administrator to ask OST if the briefing can be done with OMB.

Portland-Milwaukie

- FD approval could occur during this summer.
- TriMet is working on the financial plan. They want to know how much annual New Starts funding can they presume?
- If they can presume annual New Starts funding of \$250.0 million, then no financing will be required.
- TPE is assessing the New Starts pipeline to show potential annual New Starts program funding for the next few years.
- A bigger issue might be the amount of funding that regions receive.
- NEXT STEP/ACTION ITEM:
 - Discuss the project funding matter with TOA today.